



PRIME MINISTER

115/93

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP

ENTOMBMENT OF THE UNKNOWN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER - AN EVENT OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

I am pleased today to formally declare the funeral and entombment of the Unknown Australian Soldier in the Australian War Memorial on 11 November 1993 an event of national importance.

The ceremony, timed to mark the 75th Anniversary of the 1918 Armistice, will be the most significant commemorative event in the history of the Memorial since it opened on Armistice Day 1941. Surviving Australian veterans of the first world war will participate in the ceremonies - providing a unique opportunity for the nation to honour them and to remember all Australians who have fought and died in war.

Assisted by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and officials from the Australian Funeral Directors' Association, the Australian War Memorial will recover the remains of an unknown soldier from one of the many battlefields cemeteries in France. It was this area where Australia suffered its largest number of casualties in the first world war. The Tomb in the Memorial's Hall of Memory is intended to symbolise all Australians who have died in war, and to provide a central point for national remembrance.

A national telecast of the event will be provided by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. All Australians, wherever they may be, are encouraged to participate. They may attend the funeral in Canberra, take part in their local Remembrance Day ceremony or watch the ABC broadcast. I ask all Australians to join in the observation of the traditional two minutes silence at 11:00am on 11 November.

**CANBERRA
18 OCTOBER 1993**